

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 21, 2014

TO: Chairs and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Mary Glassman, Chairman, Capitol Region Council of Governments and Lyle D. Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments

SUBJECT: **RAISED BILL NO. 5584, AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALISM AND MAKING TECHNICAL CHANGES TO STATUTES CONCERNING MUNICIPAL TAX COLLECTION**

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) which currently represents Hartford and 29 surrounding towns and will be soon adding eight more municipalities supports RB 5584, An Act Concerning Regionalism and Making Technical Changes to Statutes Concerning Municipal Tax Collection.

CRCOG has long served as a convener and facilitator of intergovernmental cooperation for our 30 Capitol Region towns and a number of other towns throughout the state. Our Capitol Region Purchasing Council now stands at 87 members. Currently, CRCOG provides interested municipalities with access to Annual Cooperative Bids (up to 20 bids per year), Energy Reverse Auctions (Natural Gas and Electricity), Public Safety Data and Training, Online Permitting software, a Job Order Contracting program and a Regional Online GIS System. CRCOG also offers direct and brokered services in Solid Waste and Materials Management, Public Safety Technical Assistance, GIS Assistance, Mobile Data Display system for police vehicles and a new IT Services Cooperative.

CRCOG has seen an increasing need to offer these types of cooperative opportunities as local revenues are stressed and technology makes back office sharing much easier. CRCOG has found that this type of cooperative approach eases the burden of undercapitalization in local government and front-end sticker shock of new systems. For this reason, we strongly support Section 10 of this bill and are ready, willing and able to serve in any capacity to further these proposed demonstration projects. We would involve any interested and capable municipalities in Connecticut, as we have with our ongoing service sharing programming to date.

The roll-out of the state's broadband fiber Nutmeg Network provides an enormous opportunity for local governments to work together and leverage technology to provide services to their residents. CRCOG's partnership with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology creates a strong team to manage the complicated process of applying technology solutions to local government operations and assist municipalities to nimbly move to new approaches. CRCOG can perform the issues assessment and

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create solutions that combine municipal purchasing power and technology into solutions that are best practice and useful to the particular needs of Connecticut's communities. Participating municipalities decide to opt in and benefit from initial work already done.

As drafted, we suggest a number of changes. In Section 1, we need to add several Capitol Region municipalities: Bloomfield, East Granby, East Windsor, Enfield and Granby. These would be added to Section 1(a)(1) to join our other Capitol Region towns. Several other new councils of governments may have other towns to add.

We suggest changes to Section 9 that more clearly define the role of regional planning commissions. Specifically, the sentence that ends on line 352 should also include language that states an exception for advisory comments on zoning amendments and subdivision issues which may be issued by the regional planning commission prior to regional council of government's endorsement. Also, the qualifications of member should be not only members of local planning commissions, but also members of local planning and zoning commissions (line 356).

Finally, in Section 10 the numbers 6 and 7 have transposed the total budget numbers for the described demonstration projects. CRCOG was involved in the concept development of these projects on the MORE Regions Committee, and we see from our documentation that \$750,000 should be assigned to town and Board of Education finance systems and \$405,750 be for the shared online human resources portal.

CRCOG greatly appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on this proposed bill and looks forward to providing any additional assistance the Committee may request.e